



Study of Social Economic and Legislative Factors that Hinder Women's Empowerment and Ability to Assume Leadership Positions

This Study was conducted by
UNDP and UN Women in cooperation with Advocate Esraa' Mahadin

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جميع حقوق الطبع محفوظة

برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي هو وكالة الأمم المتحدة الرائدة في العمل على إنهاء الظلم الناتج عن الفقر وعدم المساواة وتغيير المناخ. من خلال العمل مع شبكة واسعة من الخبراء والشركاء في 170 بلداً يساعد البرنامج الإنمائي الدول على وضع حلول متكاملة ودائمة للناس وكوكب الأرض. لمعرفة المزيد الرجاء زيارة الموقع الإلكتروني للبرنامج الإنمائي: undp.org، أو متابعته على [@UNDP](https://www.facebook.com/UNDP) و [@UNDP Jordan](https://www.instagram.com/undp_jordan).

يتضمن هذا الكتيب البيانات المتاحة للجمهور ذات الصلة بمشروع الحد والتقليل من الملوثات العضوية الثابتة. البرنامج الإنمائي غير مسؤول عن البيانات المقتبسة أو أية مغالطات أو التحقق من صحة البيانات.

وبالرغم مما سبق، لا يجوز إستنساخ أي جزء من هذا المنشور أو تخزينه في أي نظام أو نقله بأي شكل أو بأية وسيلة، إلكترونية كانت أو آلية، أو بالنسخ الضوئي أو بالتسجيل، أو بأية وسيلة أخرى، دون الحصول على إذن مسبق من برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي. تمثل الآراء الواردة في هذا المنشور وجهة نظر المؤلف/المؤلفين ولا تعبر بالضرورة عن وجهة نظر الأمم المتحدة بما في ذلك برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي أو الدول الاعضاء في الأمم المتحدة.



► Introduction

Women in the Arab world in general and in Jordan in particular face numerous challenges, especially with regard to the political, economic and social conditions the Middle East and North Africa Region is currently facing, as women are the weakest link facing these conditions.

Challenges facing women are classified into two categories. First, the challenges that result from traditional and cultural norms, and second the challenges related to applied legislation, and those related to the level of government's adherence to related international treaties and conventions.

In addition, the greatest challenge faced by women is the societal context, culture and traditions , including gender-based violence against women both politically and socially, within the family or society as a whole. There are also economic challenges concerning the lack of job opportunity and high unemployment rates. According to the Department of Statistics¹ , women's economic activity was 14.9% while that of males reached 53.1%. Non-working women rated 33.6% compared to males at 21.2% according to the employment and unemployment survey.

Despite the intense efforts to educate women in certain communities, these efforts failed to create a significant movement toward in depth change in the conventional image of women. there is a need to develop tools and expand groups targeted by political and feminist leaderships to bring about faster, greater and more effective change.

Realizing the significance of women's participation in development, several official and unofficial bodies in Jordan seek to enhance and improve women's empowerment and their leading roles to represent women in various relevant sectors. Therefore, it is expected that women are to play significant roles, one way or another, in the structural development of society when politically and economically empowered.

In spite of all the efforts concerning economic empowerment, Jordan's rank remains low in the [Global Gender Gap Report](#) ² . The report includes studies of four areas including inequality between men and women in 130 major and startup corporates around the world concerning economic participation, opportunity, education, political empowerment, health and life rate. The following table shows Jordan's rank in the past four reports on gender in general and in economic participation and political empowerment issued in (2018, 2020, 2021,2022).

¹ The Department of Statistics Fourth quarter of the year 2022

² Issued for the first time in 2006 prior to the Global Economic Forum, which is an indicator designed to measure gender equality. Annual reports are issued to provide a frame to compare global gaps between genders through displaying model states in equal resource distribution among men and women. the report is an incentive for awareness as well as political plyers exchange.

Table- Jordan's rank according to the Global Gender Gap Reports

Year	Global Rank in Gender Gap	Rank in Economic Participation and Opportunity	Rank in Political Empowerment
2018 (149 participating countries)	138	144	129
2020 (153 participating countries)	138	145	113
2021 (149 participating countries)	131	133	144
2022 (146 participating countries)	122	125	136



The table above shows an improvement in Jordan's rank through the years from 138 in 2018 to 122 during the year of 2022 in the Global Gender Gap. As for economic participation and opportunity, Jordan reached the lowest rank in 2020, at 145, but rose to 125 in 2022. Political empowerment ranked Jordan at 113 in 2020 retreating to 144 in 2021. The report shows a noticeable improvement in Jordan's rank in economic participation and opportunity through the years, unlike political empowerment which was volatile through the four reports till it reached 136. There was an increasing attention to women's issues during recent years in Jordan, particularly in political

and economic areas, the last of which was the Jordanian Constitution amendment for 2022 which included several aspects.

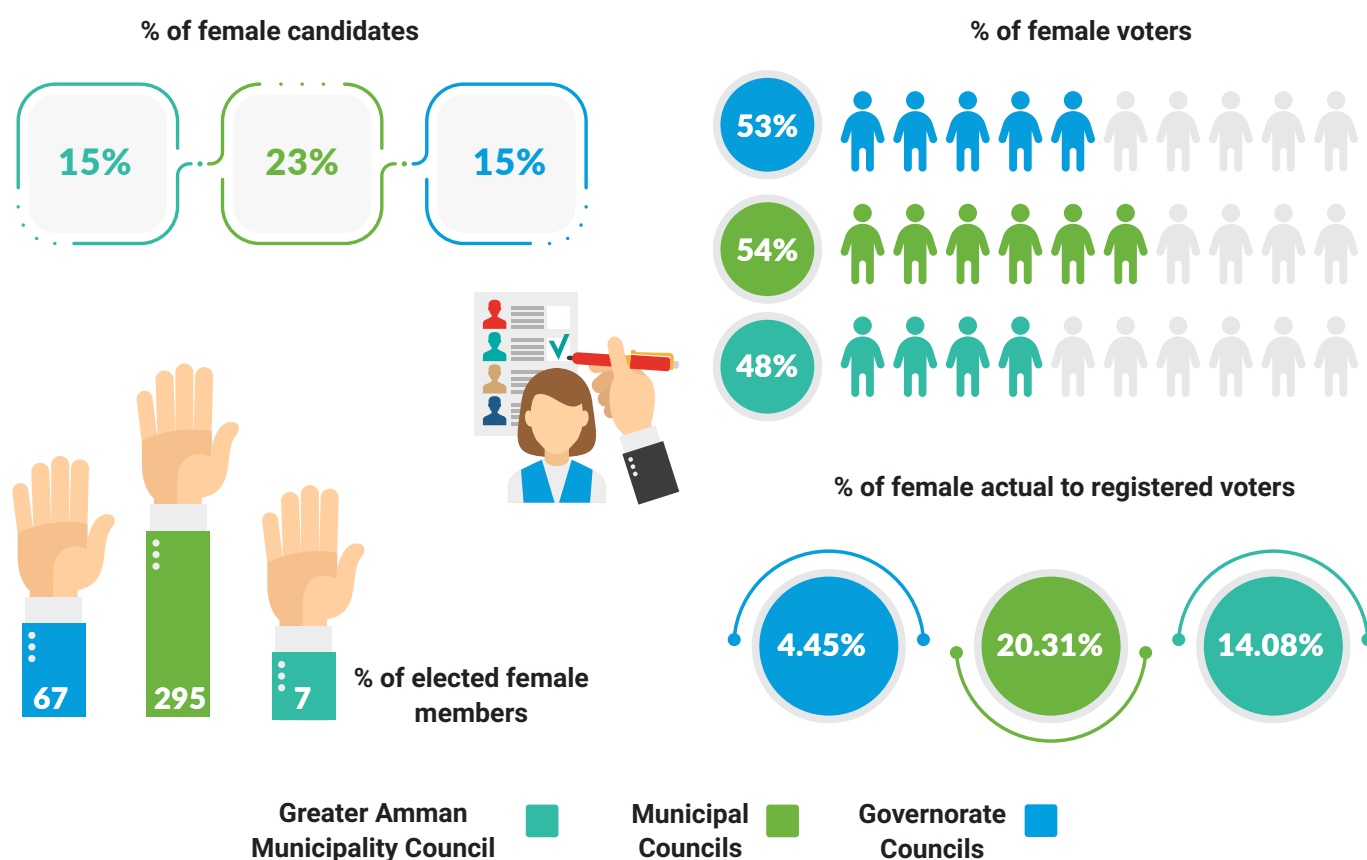
In Chapter Two of the constitution "Rights and Duties of Jordanians", the word "Urduniyat" (the feminine form of Jordanians in Arabic) was added. Also, the sixth paragraph of Article six was added quoting: "The state guarantees the empowerment and support of women to play an active role in building society in a manner that guarantees equal opportunities on the basis of justice and fairness and their protection from all forms of violence and discrimination".

Additionally, there were other amendments of elections law and political parties law increasing the number of seats allotted to women to 18 in local electoral districts (one for each district). The presence of at least one female among the first three candidates as well as the second list of three candidates of the of the political party list. The year 2022 also witnessed the Elections for

local administrative councils, municipal councils, governorate councils and the Amman Municipality Council, which showed a huge decrease in the participation of women due to a number of reasons, among which the cancellation of the local councils. Not a single female took the office of mayor in any of the Jordanian municipalities.

Table- The participation of women in provincial councils in2022 ³

Election Type	% of female voters	% of female actual to registered voters	% of female candidates	# of elected female members	# of elected female heads of council
Governorate Councils	%53	%14.08	%15	67	0
Municipal Councils	%54	%20.31	%23	295	0
Greater Amman Municipality Council	%48	%4.45	%48	7	0



³ Independent Election Commission reports.

The table above show that 7 women were elected in the Amman Municipal Council elections, 6 of whom through the women's quota. 67 women were elected for the municipal councils, 59 of which were through quota. Women elected for the municipal councils

were 295, 200 of whom won through quota. There were no female candidates for the position of mayor, and none was elected for head of governorate council.

Table- the numbers of female winners in the latest elections 2022

Council	Female winners	Winners of quota seats	Female winners by competition
Amman Municipal Council	7	6	1
Governorate Councils	67	59	8
Municipal Councils	295	200	95

At the economic level, The Economic Modernization Vision Document was issued representing a new vision with the participation of 500 specialized and experienced members of various economic sectors to face the slowing economy and decreased ability to create job opportunities which resulted from regional and international situations after the Covid pandemic. The document did not address, in any of its topics, the economic participation of women or ensuring gender equality. The word "women" appeared only 6 times throughout the 125-page document, and the phrase "gender equality" came up only once.

The Vision consisted of eight topics concerning investment, sustainable environment, high value industries, quality of life, sustainable resources, entrepreneurship and innovation, future services and Jordan as a global destination. Under these topic, 366 initiatives were recorded. These were scheduled over three phases through the years 2022-2033- in order to achieve a number of strategic goals, most importantly: creating one million job opportunities

for young men and women, raise the average annual individual income by 3%, elevate Jordan's rank in the global competitiveness index to reach the highest 30%, raise Jordan's rank in the environmental performance index to the highest 20%, improve the level of satisfaction and quality of life to 80%, elevate Jordan's position on Legatum Prosperity index to the highest 30%. The vision aims at attracting investments and funding worth of JD 41 million during the coming decade, most of which are from the private sector in order to decrease public funding and encourage foreign investment.

Reviewing the Economic Modernization Vision from a gender perspective⁴, in terms of how much the vision is willing to invest to achieve gender equality in economic participation and the empowerment of women, it turned out that was not among the goals of the Vision. Women were not mentioned in any of the initiatives of the sectorial goals except in the transformational industries. Disabled and refugee females were not mentioned at all.

⁴ Women's Empowerment Strategy in the Economic Modernization Vision approved by the Ministerial Committee for the Empowerment of Women

The Vision has in fact mentioned the Global Gender Gap index, however, this index was excluded from the indexes that will be tracked for evaluation and feedback. In addition, women's situation was not adequately addressed in the sectors within the Sectors Vision Document for 2033 and the 2022-2033 roadmap. Although there was a brief mention of women's participation in some sectors, there were no suggestions to address the weak participation of women to narrow the gender gap in employment.

Similarly, according to the UNDP Human Development Report ⁵ evaluating human development from a gender perspective, there is actually a huge gap as the index value for female human development was 0.663 while males index value was 0.748

although Jordan's rank was 102 of 189 states at 0.720 on the human development index value. As for the improvement achieved in the fifth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), (achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women), it appears that more efforts are needed as the percentage of parliamentary seats occupied by women is 15.4 in the year 2022, and the percentage of seats in local administrative bodies is 27.80% and in ministerial positions 9.1%.

Women who want to participate in the labour market face high unemployment rate at 30.7% among females in comparison to 22.4 % among males according to official statistics.

⁵ <https://www.undp.org/ar/arab-states/publications/%D8%AA%D982%D8%B1%D98%A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D984%D8%AA%D986%D985%D98%A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D984%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%B1%D98%A%D8%A9-%D984%D8%B9%D8%A7%D92020-85%20>



Executive Summary:

Methodology:

The study was carried out to analyse the social, economic and legislative factors that hinder women's empowerment and their ability to assume leadership positions based on a specific methodology designed by the task team to collect data needed to conclude results and recommendations. Data collection and interview extended from 1/ 12/ 2022 to 22/2022/12/. Elected ladies were contacted and invited to attend the focus-group discussions . All mayors and heads of governorate councils were also invited. The numbers of respondents of both sexes were as shown below.

The methodology used three ways to collect data:

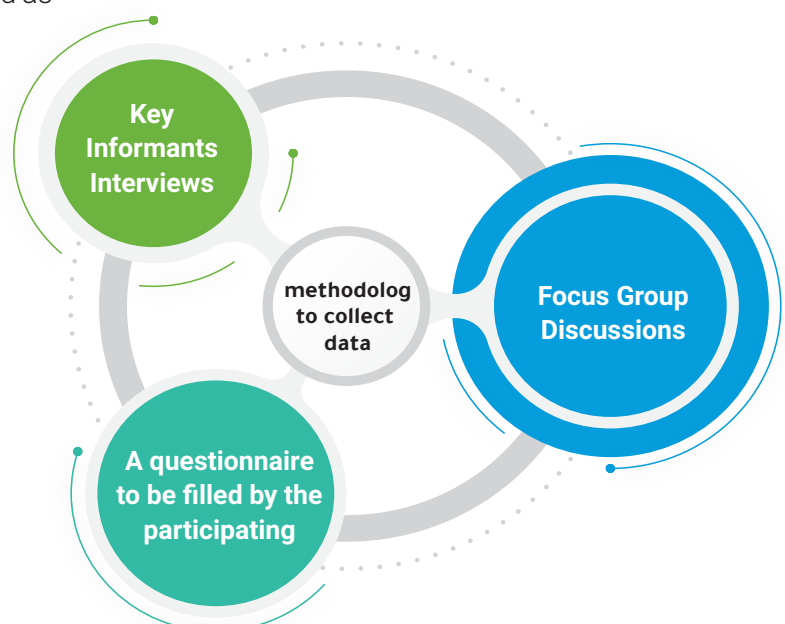
1. Key Informants Interviews – KIIs included interviews with
 - Mayors, 66 out of 99 throughout the country were interviewed at a percentage of 66.7%.
 - Heads of governorate councils, 8 out of 12 throughout the country were interviewed at a percentage of 66.7%.
 - Female Municipal Executive Directors, 13 out of 24 (54.2%) were interviewed.

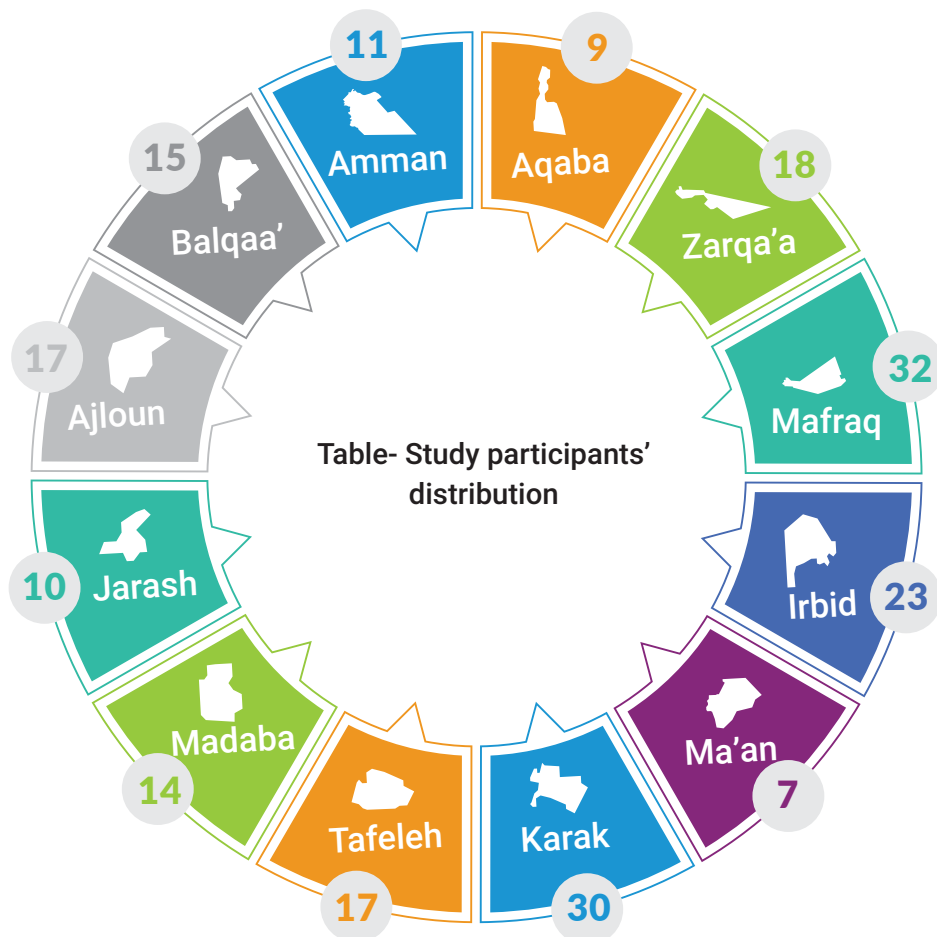
A team of 12 researchers of both sexes performed the interviews (at a rate of one researcher per governorate). The team had previously been trained to use a questionnaire designed for this purpose.

2. Focus Group Discussions, with elected females in municipal and governorate councils. 14 focus group discussions were put up and distributed as follows:
 - One session for each governorate.
 - Two sessions in Irbid Governorate.
 - Two sessions in Al Mafrq Governorate.

A total of 203 elected females participated in these sessions which were run by the study team. The duration of each session was one and a half hours in average. They were recorded, transcribed and used in data analysis.

3. A questionnaire to be filled by the participating elected females for municipal and governorate councils in person. A total of 203 questionnaires were collected and used in data analysis.



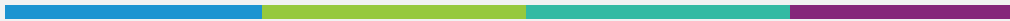


The study team tried to reach as many respondents as possible at the governorates' level to measure the differences in social, economic and legislative factors that hinder the empowerment of women and

their ability to assume leadership positions in these governorates. When analysing the results though, it turned out there were no differences in obstacle from one governorate to another.

Study Results

The Social, Economic and Legislative Factors that Hinder Women's Empowerment and Ability to Assume Leadership Positions.



Chapter One- Social Obstacle to Women's Empowerment and Assuming Leadership Roles.

Society is a significant base for women's empowerment and them assuming leading roles, as it includes the family, relatives, friends and colleagues whose role is quite significant but also might be an obstacle in the face of women's success and progress.

Results from the focus group discussions showed that social factors that hinder women's empowerment and assuming leading roles are affected by several elements such as culture, traditions and mores, gender discrimination and the tribal system.

The Jordanian culture views women as a weak being with limited abilities the purpose of whom is to merely stay at home and serve the family, according to many respondents of both sexes. This is due to several reasons, among which is the educational system that enhances the stereotypical image of women. the media and social media also have a role in limiting women to specific roles that affect women's image in society.

Society views women through a shame point of view and marginalizes them. This reflects on women in various sectors. Many participants explained that they were excluded from many meetings and managerial positions because of men's view of women as emotional and unable to make decisions, and that her presence in municipal and governorate councils is a mere worthless number. The participants expressed difficulties they faced in attending awareness or business field courses because they were excluded by decision makers in elected councils, particularly if those were evening courses required them to meet with males or compete with them to earn the tribe's support.

Due to this social perspective, the participants agreed they were attacked by some societal groups during elections. They were let down and deprived of support due to the stereotypical image of women. Even when a woman is successful in all aspects, she always comes second to the man. Some traditions also hinder women starting always with the word shame. She is thus forbidden from participating with males or meeting with them. She is not allowed to attend any evening events lest she would be criticized. She is deprived of being involved with the local community except for females only activities for fear of her husband, family or society's criticism. Through personal interviews with heads of municipal councils, they explained many challenges that affect the political participation of women as traditions and mores are women's empowerment's biggest challenge, as well as the attitude of society and culture.

An elected female from Aqaba:

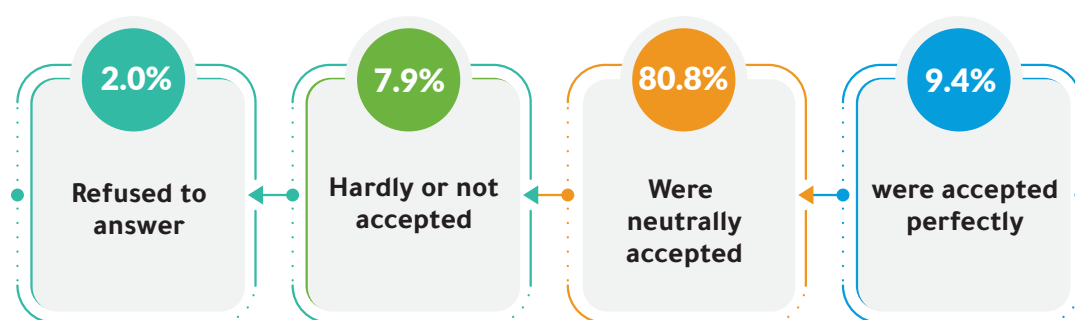
"I participated in a workshop, and my car needed repair so I couldn't attend. I suggested that my husband and I go together. He said now all the tribal elites are attending and you want to go on your own? Your friend said she was not going for private reasons. I insisted till my husband agreed, but I was the only female attendant."

Another elected female from Ajloun:

“Our view as a local community of women is like how can you stay out at night? How can you attend meeting at night? How can you attend conferences? Our view of women that they get college degree even more than men, yet we suffer poverty and unemployment. In most cases it is the head of the family who stops her from using public transport. Also, low wages. I mean a woman would leave her home and children for 260 JDs? It's not worth it, she prefers to stay at home”.

The ladies saw that the patriarchal society limits the growth and participation of women. Despite the awareness raising opportunities provided by civil society and NGOs, the family might still stop her from participating. This affects women's ability to reach decision making posts. Society also believes it is inappropriate and shameful for a woman to use her pictures during elections.

When participants were personally asked about their assessment of local society's acceptance of them as members of councils, their answers varied as follows:



An elected female from Maan expressed her personal experience saying:

“that she wanted a driving license, but her family refused. “I insisted and they finally agreed, but the society rejected me as doing things that only men do and they did not accept me.”

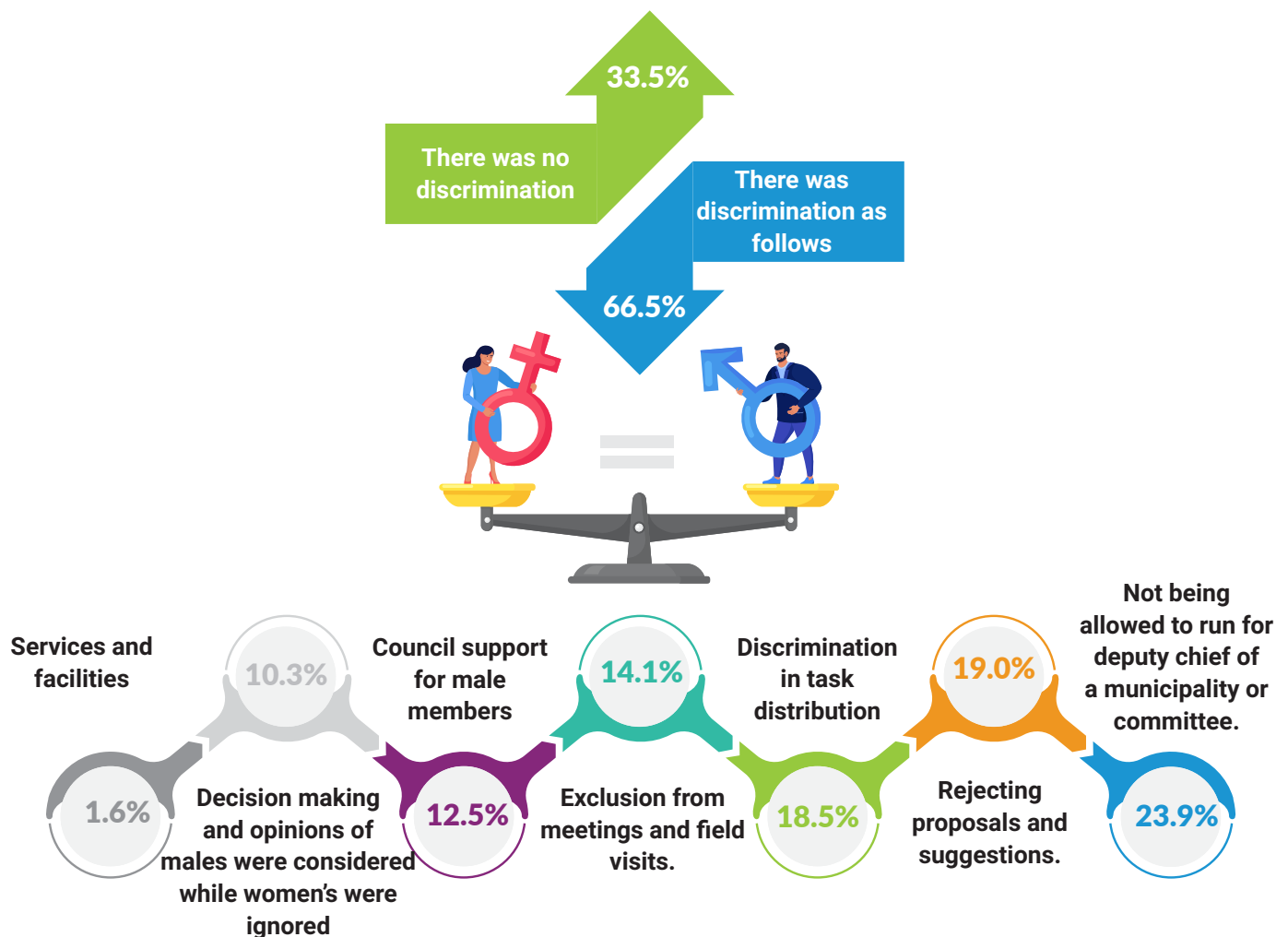
In addition, an elected woman faces many challenges among which are bullying, marginalization and exclusion by male colleagues in the councils for the mere reason they are women. Their proposals were dismissed in favour of those by men, and their role was limited to signing documents. For example, a member said she made a proposal which was rejected by the council. Later the same proposal was made by a man and was passed.

Therefore, gender discrimination is a major obstacle against the empowerment of women. As confirmed by most participants, the society prefers to vote for men and keep the managerial positions for men as well.

When participants were asked personally about the way other male members of the council treated them, and if there was any bias in dealing with male and female members, the answers came as follows:



When participants were personally asked about gender-based discrimination in municipal or governorate councils, they answered as follows:



One of the challenges that faces women in elected councils is that the mayor would prefer to include male members in committees and in meetings inside and out of the council. Sometimes women were forced to change their minds when voting on decisions as males believe they are more aware of the council's wellbeing than the women. On other occasions women were repressed in councils so much so that female members prefer to keep quiet than participate in any decision. Politically, the society does not accept women assuming high positions as this would mean a woman would be leading men. Society also fails to accept the presence of women in economic sectors neither does it accept their political participation.

An elected female from Jarash:

"Male members of councils have a huge effect on the women members with regard to decision making, trying to make them accept the decisions they want even if when the female member it is not convinced. Also, when they make the decision, it is the usually theirs (the men's) as they are the majority in the council."

This leads to the importance of having at least 30% female members of the elected councils so that they are effectively represented in councils.

The ladies complained of disregard of the media of their accomplishments while highlighting what the male members do which results in social denial of the role of women and in the confidence in women's role in elected councils.

The study showed that the tribal system has a great role in women's political and economic success, but in most cases, it was also an obstacle. Many women were forced to elect a certain person within the tribe.

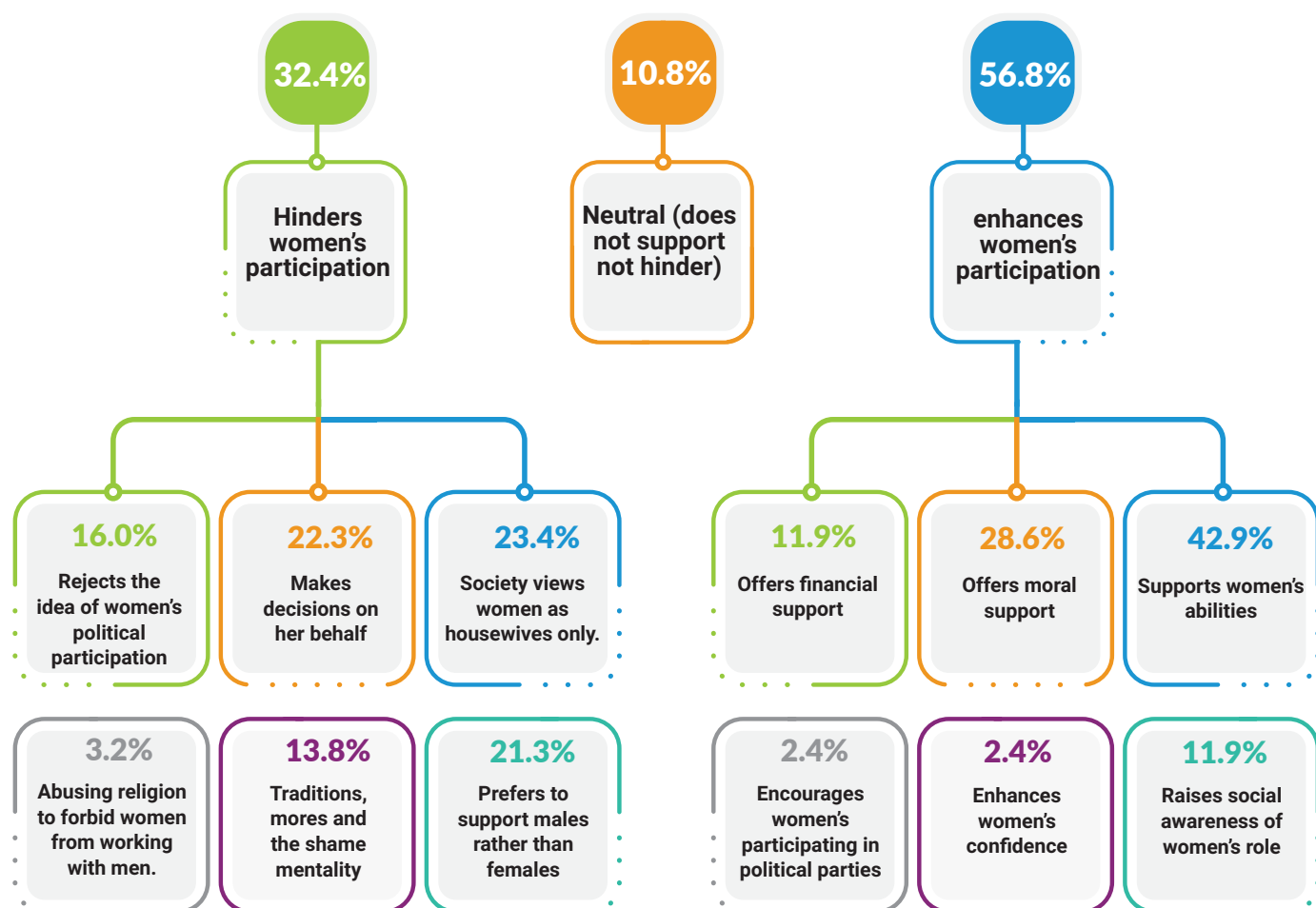
Tribes would also fight female candidates and force them to step down, a member from Tafileh stated

"My brother ran against me and lured all the tribe's votes for him."

Many tribes would forbid female candidates from participating in internal elections⁶, therefore they did not benefit from tribal unanimous vote. Tribes

also prefer to support males both materially and emotionally for they have faith in their ability to succeed, unlike women. should a woman run for elections and have the support of her tribe, other tribes would fight her and try to lure the male voters of her own tribe to their side. In many cases when the woman is supported by her tribe, her chance of winning a competitive seat is weak, so she resorts to running for a female allocated seat to insure a winner from the tribe, not for her incompetence. In several instances, women do not run upon their wish, but rather by a tribal decision made by the males. She is then informed of the decision and in that case the tribe pays all expenses.

When heads of municipal and governorate councils were asked about the role of the family and the tribe in enhancing or hindering women's political and economic participation, there answers were as follows:



⁶ Internal tribal elections are elections carried out by the tribe and other communities in different governorates to choose the candidate who would participate in the any coming elections. The males of the tribe meet to vote in these elections.

Due to women's inability to be strongly involved with society to offer community services that would make them socially recognized, therefore their capabilities would also not be recognised. The tribe would rather abstain from voting to women comparing them to the more capable males.

During personal interviews with heads of municipal councils, they explained the tribal role starting from hindering women because of stereotypical image of women's role only within the home to abusing religion to forbid women from working in jobs that require them to work with men.

A female from Ajloun said:

"My tribe fought me and assured me that I will never win. They made a bet in front of all the tribe that I would lose."

Another from Tafileh added:

"My husband stopped me from running for head of council as a male member of his tribe was running."

During personal interviews with female members of municipal councils, most of them stated that their biggest problem was society's view of women and the patriarchal nature of society, their tribes opposing their candidacy, gender-based discrimination, difficulty in convincing the family of a woman's candidacy, the shame mentality and traditions, lack of awareness towards women, women going against women, certain parties challenging female candidates, blocking votes for her, and the rejection of women's candidacy.

The most interesting point during the focus group discussions was the effect of cancelling local councils by the new Local Administration Law on women's political participation. It resulted in decreasing the number of seats allocated for women. Winning mechanism now depends on the ratio of voting in the electoral districts. This made it harder for women especially in large electoral districts. Cancelling local councils hindered women from assuming leadership positions despite their presence in elected councils. When female participants were personally asked about the social challenges they faced, their answers were as follows:

The biggest problem was society's view of women and the patriarchal society. Discrimination between men and women and difficulty to convince the family of the woman running. Shame mentality and traditions and mores. Lack of awareness of women's role. Women going against women. certain parties' fighting female candidates. Obstructing votes. And the rejection of women candidacy.

71.9%

28.1%

Did not face any social problems.

When female participants were personally asked about challenges they face in their local communities, the answers were as follows.



Chapter Two- Economic Obstacle to women's empowerment and leading roles.

Analysing the data from the focus group sessions that were held, the economic factors can be divided into several factors. The financial, the procedural, the marketing, the knowledge and the employment.

Financial independence, which many women lack in Jordan, is the basic step towards economic success. Many participants confirmed that women are financially dependent, leading to their need for the family and the males to provide for them and support them to start an economic venture, or during an elections campaign. The reasons for women's financial dependence include limited income sources, lack of means of transport to their workplace when they do have a job, low wages in most socially acceptable jobs such as public or private schools, factories and some stores. In some cases, women do have a source of income, but they do not own a financial decision. This income can be subject to the family or husband's control. Also, financial support from government institutions, NGOs or associations during elections is not allowed according to the Associations Law and its amendments No. 51 of 2008. Loans offered to women usually support small economic ventures which in many cases are not sustainable. Only a few institutions start up new projects that help employ women and use their skills to empower them economically. Women's sources of financial support remain scarce.

When participants were asked in person about getting any help or support during their electoral campaign, the answers were as follows:

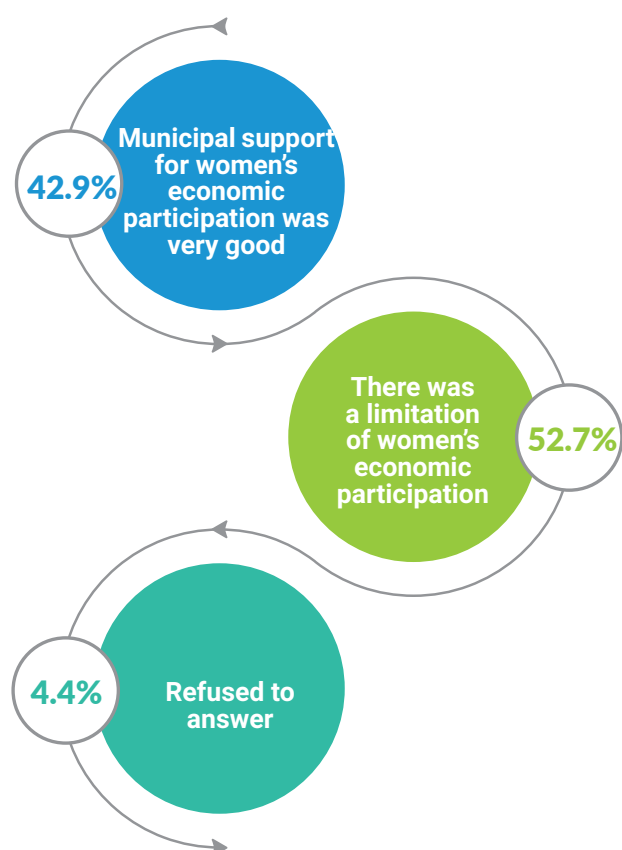
Did not receive any kind of support.	62.1%
Received mainly moral support and a little financial support from family and relatives.	17.7%
Moral support from local communities	5.4%
Financial support from NGOs and associations	3.0%
Financial support from political parties	2.0%
Financial allowance in return for sessions	1.5%
Refused to answer	8.3%

As for the support supposed to be offered by municipalities to empower women financially, an elected female from Balqa'a stated:

"There was never any support for ventures by the municipality.

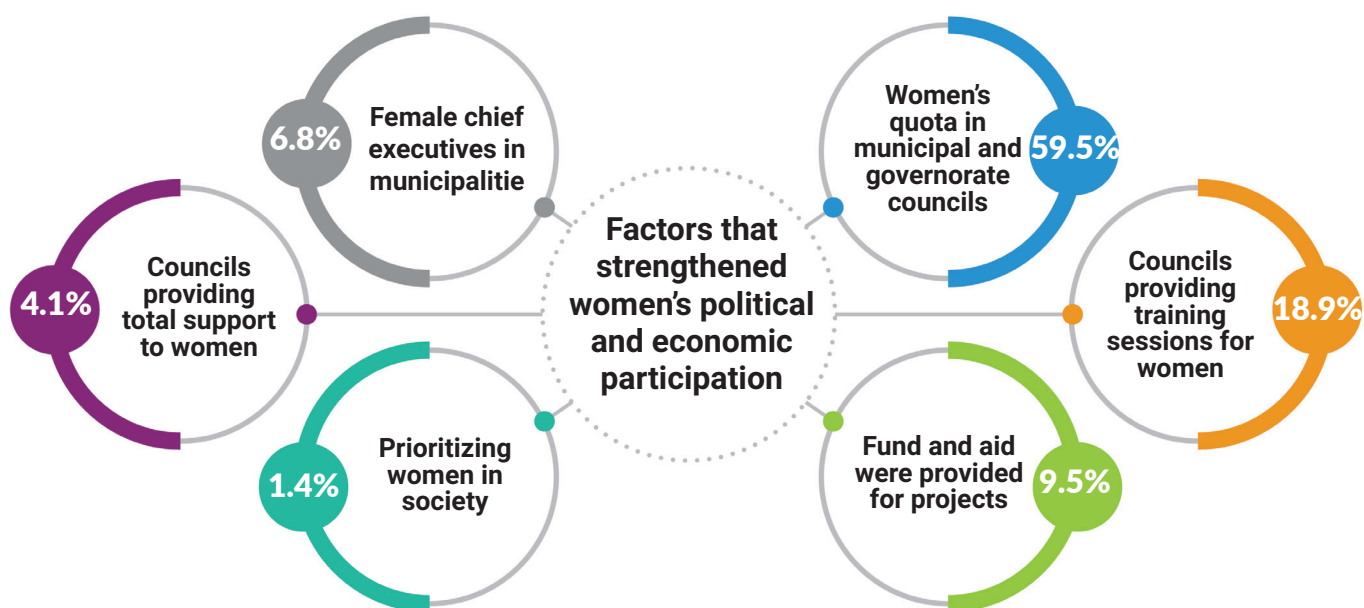
We do not have any support. We would take a loan for our projects and did not receive any logistic or financial support as members of municipal boards with a salary of JDs 200. We paid for field visits when done. We are treated unfairly in society and in the municipality."

When participants were asked in person to describe the role of the municipality in empowering or hindering women's economic participation, they answered as follows:

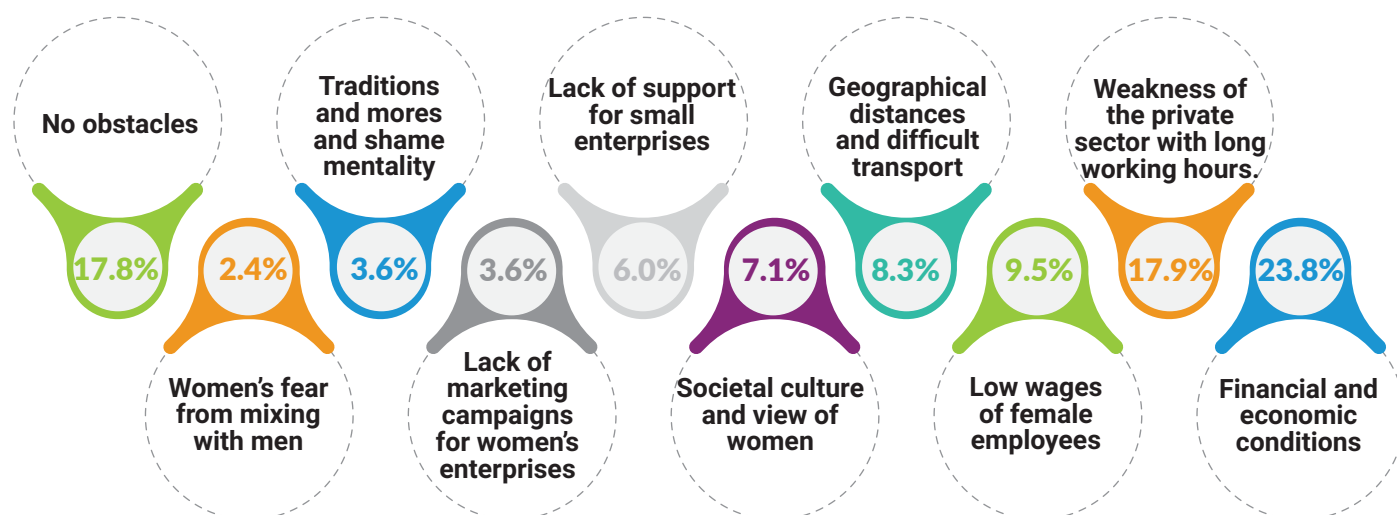


When heads of municipal councils and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about the factors that affect women's political and economic participation, their answers were,

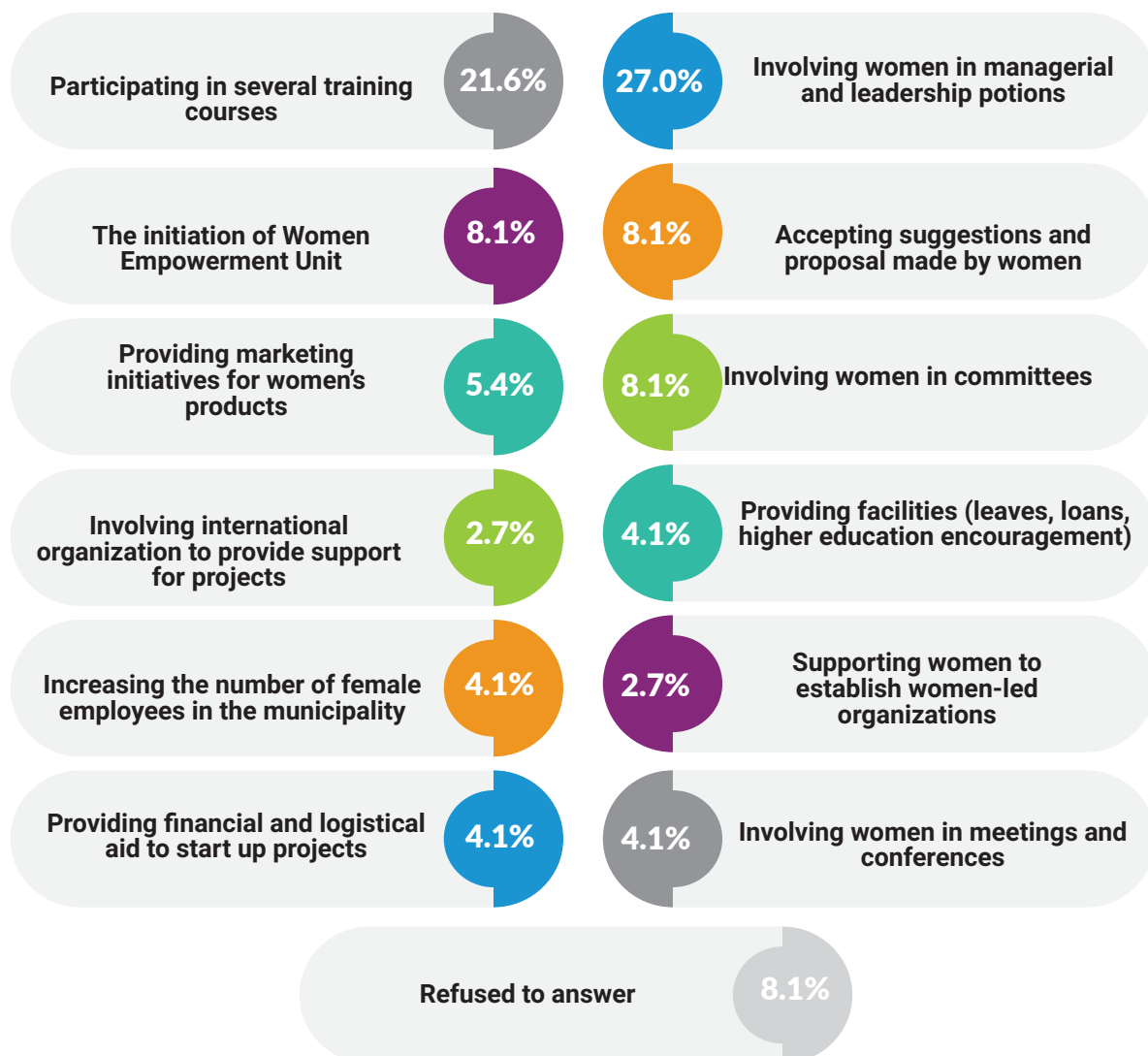
Traditions and social norms	31.1%
The social perspective	14.9%
Lack of financial independence	14.9%
Women finding difficulty to balance work and household duties	12.2%
Lack of clarity allotted numbers in some districts	10.8%
Lack of women's political awareness	8.1%
Lack of job opportunities or operational projects	2.8%
Not activating women's role in society	1.3%
limiting women's jobs to conventional jobs	1.3%
Weak participation within municipalities	1.3%
Lack of job opportunities	1.3%



When heads of municipal and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about obstacles to women's economic and political participation, the answers were as follows:



When heads of municipal and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about what they have done personally or as a municipal or a governorate council, they answered:



Several female participants complained about the complicated procedures to get licences and passes for marketing enterprises. It takes forever and costs a lot. There are no incentives for women to facilitate and help them carry out their enterprises. In addition, the salary from national aid fund would be stopped as soon as a woman registers an enterprise, regardless of how minor. This led to women refraining from registering their enterprises.

Other procedural factors are related to community-based organizations. Announcements about economic programs does not reach women of all sectors of society. Only a limited sector of women benefits from the services of these projects. Those are usually limited to people with personal contacts. This leads to a large segment of women deprived from the chance to develop and progress.

Another procedural factor is the lack of follow-up for enterprises, leading to their failure, therefore limiting their benefit and their true value.

Many members also mentioned that municipalities do not allot a portion of their budget to provide for enterprises for women.

An elected female from Jarash stated:

"there are widows with no source of income except owning a family property (house). It is difficult to issue a licence. There are also difficulties related to financial cost."

Many elected females stated that the variation in procedures to register home businesses from one municipality to another makes this a challenging task. The regulations for registering home businesses are clear, but their application varies from one municipality to another. Some require a lease contract for instance, while others don't. Some employees apply requirements for a commercial store for lack of awareness of these instructions.

These are way more complicated than home business requirements. This is another obstacle to women registering such businesses.

There are also the marketing factors which are essential to the success of any enterprise. Participants explained that many businesses succeeded hugely for being exceptional hand made products, but then failed miserably for marketing reasons. The study shows that women in Jordan need training and educating courses in marketing. They also need venues to display their products such as parks, exhibits, halls, bazars, or online marketing. As women are unable to market their products, they are forced to sell at low prices to retailers who would sell them for a lot more because they can market them properly.

In case an idea and support were provided for an enterprise, or even when it is already set up, it appears that a woman's information on marketing or even on her rights and the laws that support her is quite limited. This lack of knowledge weakens her position and power. Several female participants suggested the necessity to provide introductory courses in law, marketing and management to enhance women's confidence and ensure their success and empowerment. This is mainly the responsibility of municipalities, NGOs and civil society.

In terms of jobs available for women, female participants stated that most jobs are limited to teaching, nursing and other conventional jobs with steady but low wages compared to men's jobs. Private corporates and government institutions prefer to hire men for several reasons. Men do not need long leaves for maternity, they are considered more capable of performing field jobs such as civil engineering, road engineering and even driving vehicles and cleaning services, military and security jobs. It was also noticed that some internationally supported projects hired non-Jordanian nationalities preferring them to Jordanians, although these projects were supported by local communities.

During personal interviews with heads of municipal and governorate councils, they pointed that some jobs, particularly field or on-site jobs are limited to men, so are high positions in municipalities. There is discrimination in the private sector in terms of lower pay and longer working hours.

Ladies also mentioned long distances and lack of a reliable transportation network which limits women's ability to reach either the municipality or other facilities in and out of the governorate. Also, the difficulty finding transport from the municipality due to permits and that transport means are not always available at all times.

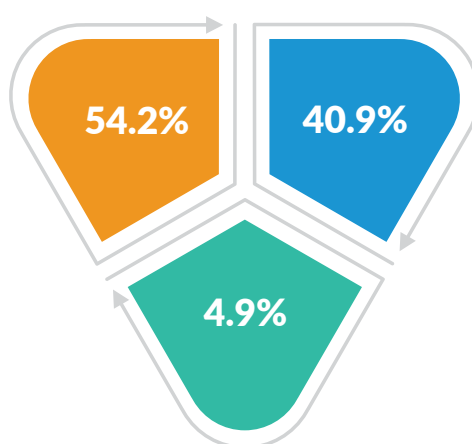
A major element that affects women's economic success is legal education, e.g. laws of social security and labour. Also, existing laws lack any incentives that encourage women's economic participation.

An elected female from Tafileh:

"Women always consider loss rather than profit. If a man is broke, he will find another job, but if a woman fails, she can never try again as no one would support her"

When female participants in the study were asked about problems or economic challenges they faced during their campaign, they answered:

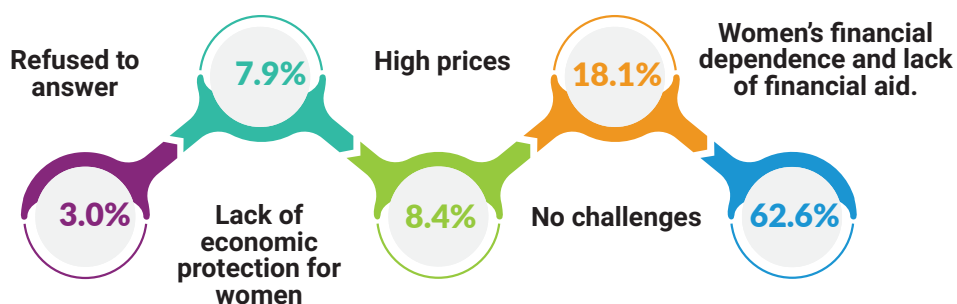
Refuses to answer (because they were embarrassed of explaining their financial situations)



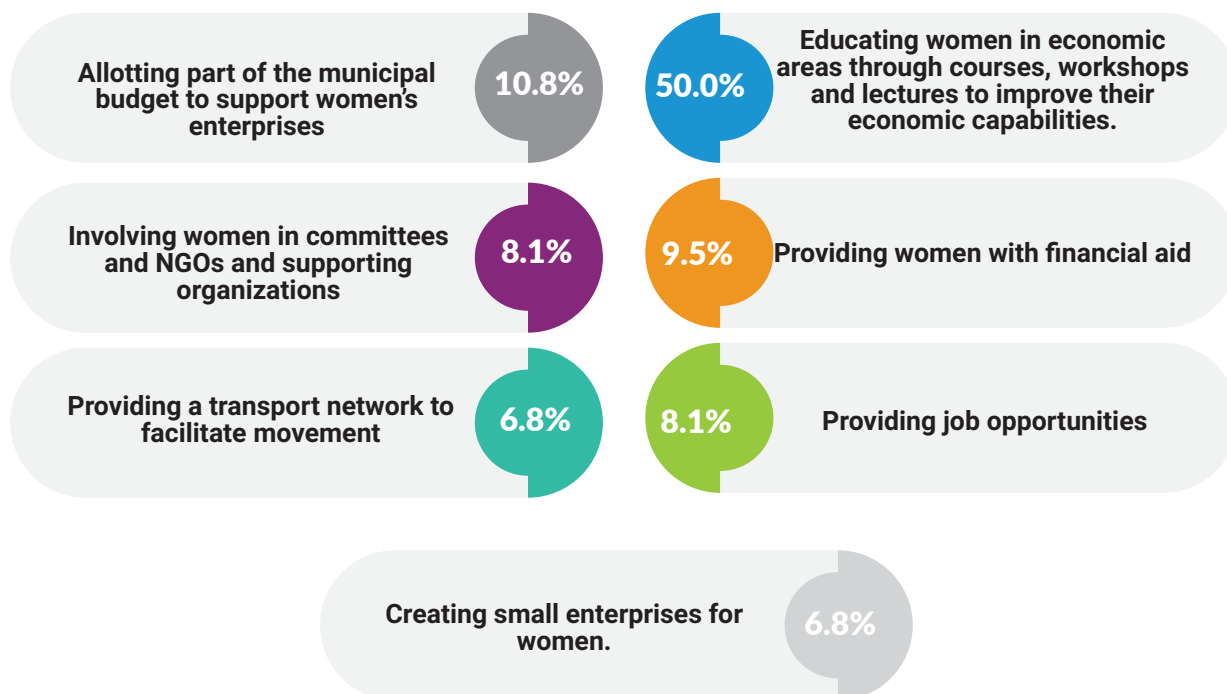
Financial obstacles due to fragile financial and economic situations, especially for women, high cost of the electoral campaigns (meals, printing, and vote-buying practices by other candidates).

Didn't face any financial challenges

When female participants were asked in person about economic challenges women have to face within their local communities, their answers were:



When heads of municipal and governorate councils who participated in the study were asked about the ways to improve and develop women's economic role in local communities, their answers were:



Chapter Three- Legislative Obstacle to women’s empowerment and assuming leadership roles.

Municipalities and governorate councils are the first service providers for citizens of both sexes on a daily basis, directly affecting their lives and they have a heavy load of responsibilities.

Analysing data from the focus group sessions showed that legislative factors that hinder women’s empowerment and assuming leading roles fall into two categories: the lack of a legal text, or lack of implementation of an existing law, either for ignorance of the law or for overriding the law.

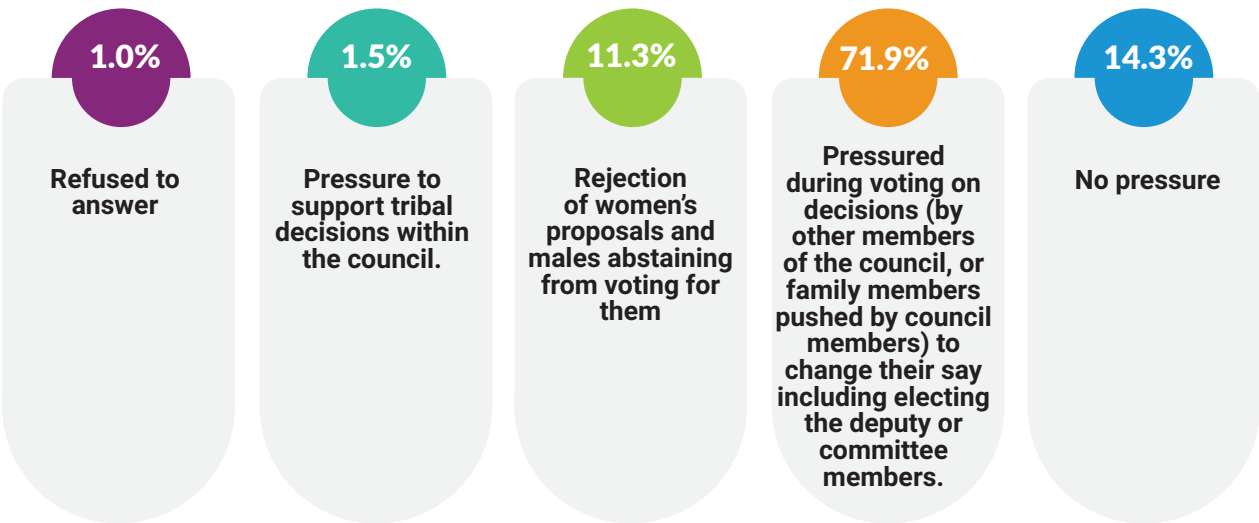
If a woman wins a municipal or governorate seat through quota, they suffer a lot of obstacles doing their jobs and tasks because they won through quota, that is the means of winning the seat. There are still many people who think of quota as a lesser group within the council. They openly say “You are quota. Stay out of this.” Or “Just sign.” Or “you are quota. You cannot discuss the budget of another area than your own.”

Although the law does not discriminate between male and female members of councils based on their means of winning, reality is completely different. Some heads of municipalities and other male members intimidate women through forcing their opinions or decision-making mechanisms.

An elected female for a municipal council stated:

“If you sign a decision for the mayor, he will be pleased with you, but if you object, you will be his enemy. If you express your opinion, he will not be pleased with you.”

When asking female participants in the study if they were pressured into accepting certain decisions in the council, the answers were as follows:



For example, refusing the participation of women in main council committees, e.g., tender or investment committees, as members, and limiting them to male members only in many municipalities. Of course it should be noted that members of these committees receive remunerations, therefore, some municipalities believe it is the men's right). In addition to that, women's participation is limited to the women's committee, which hardly has any roles or authority, to hush female members by offering them these committees.

Many females mentioned that they are not informed of any rules or regulations issued, nor are they informed of any instructions that the council receives. This was obvious when they were asked about the rules for registering home businesses as many of them had no prior idea of it.

Several municipalities include women empowerment units supposed to allow women to participate in social and economic development and to participate in the workforce. Nevertheless, many municipalities have not established such units, as they were not included in the municipal organizational structure, nor is there a budget, or employees for such units. Therefore, the decision whether to establish the unit or not is in the hands of the council or the head of council. Even when these unit were established, there is no strategic plan or operational plan or budget.

Although there is a legal text that makes council meetings open for everyone, reality is a different matter. The meetings are not open to citizens, nor are they previously announced or broadcasted through social media. This makes the meetings not in compliance with transparency and participatory standards aimed at by the law. This also applies to all sorts of meetings starting with meeting to form committees to weekly meetings held to pass decisions.

Many councils have a website or pages on social media, but they do not publish any of their decisions. The Local Administration Law article 6 stated "governorate council members are informed of the time and date of each session and the agenda at least two days before by any means decided by the head of council including electronic means.". As for municipal councils, paragraph (H) of article 14 states "council members are informed of the time, date and agenda of each session 48 hours before it is held by any means the head of council approves including electronic means." Yet, several female members complained they were not informed of the time and date of meetings. They were also required to sign decisions passed by the council in sessions they were not present at nor had the chance to discuss the decisions.

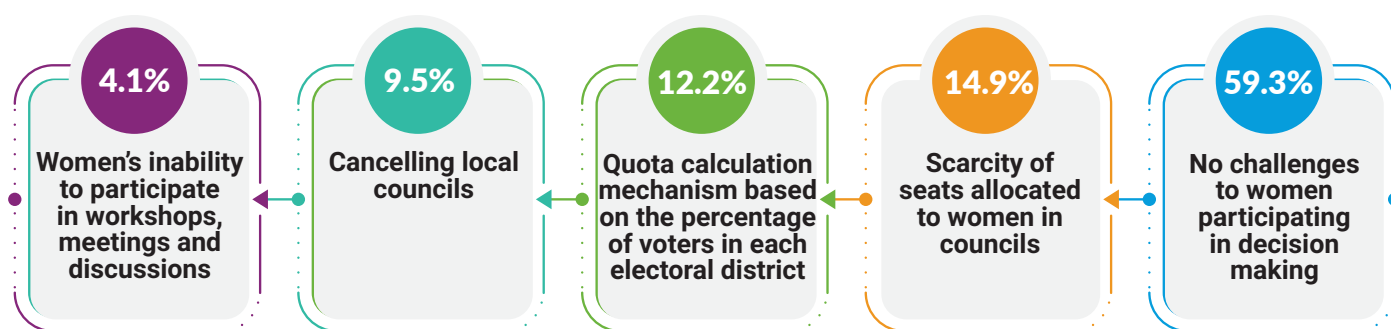
Women who refuse to vote for certain decisions are pressured into consenting. In some cases they might sign decisions they do not know the legal conditions of which, causing them to face legal charges and being referred to the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission having to go through legal battles because of an uninformed signing.

Some heads of councils use their authority to reject female members' proposals or reduce the services presented to their constituencies in favour of other areas in the case that the female member refused to vote for his decisions.

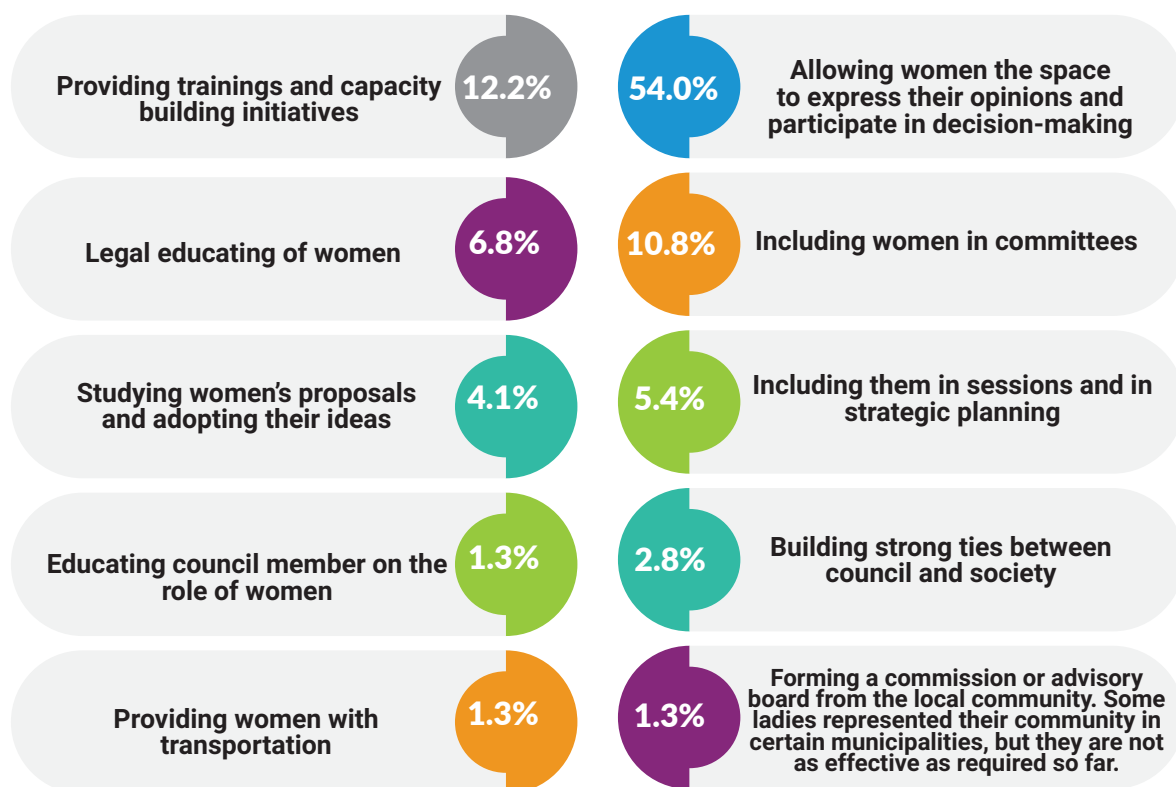
Looking at the previous chapter concerning economic factors, the licenses and procedures related to home businesses established and run by women are quite complicated with so many frustrating procedures. Such businesses can play a significant role in solving several social and economic issues, yet many women refrain from registering their business causing them a lot of problems and liabilities.

As for personal interviews with heads of councils, they explained that some legislative factors hinder women's empowerment and their reaching leadership positions. Among those are the small number of seats allocated to women in the council. They also pointed that registration and permits do include exemptions for women as support for their home businesses.

When heads of municipal and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about challenges that hinder women's empowerment and decision making positions in the Local Administration law, they answered:



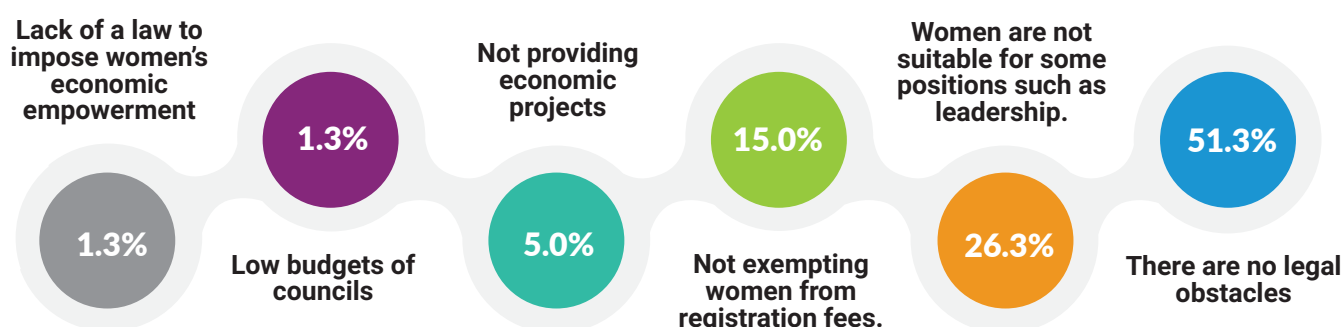
When heads of municipal and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about the role that councils play to empower women's participation in decision-making, they answered as follows:



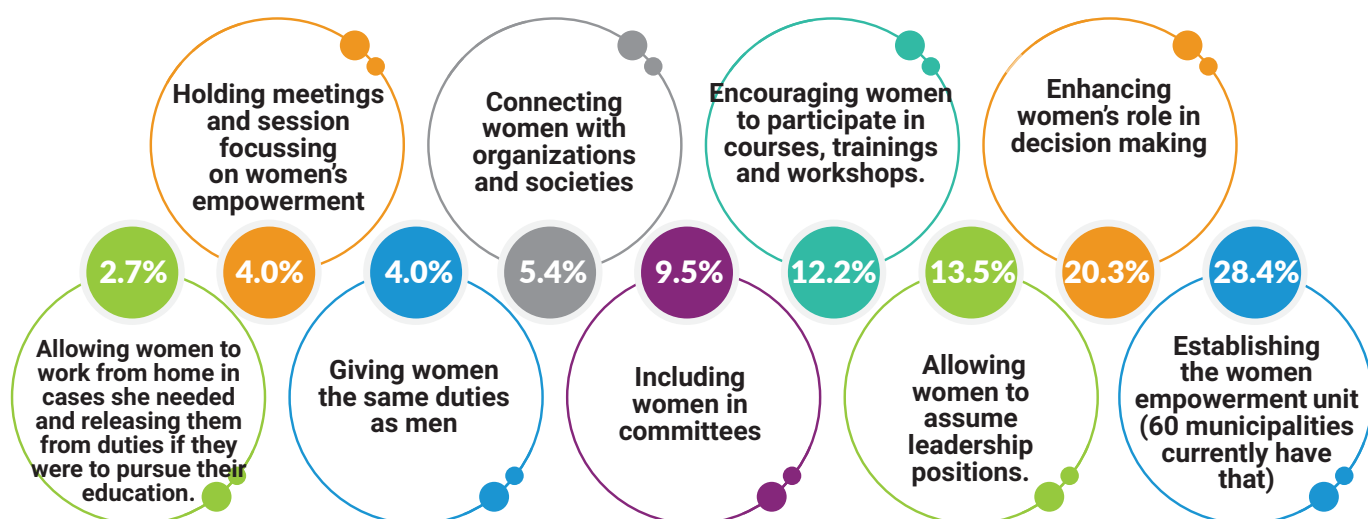
Many heads of councils and female members stated that the new law of local administration allowed the minister most of the authority in municipalities, which would delay services and weaken people's confidence in the councils, as it reflects on slowing procedures and decisions due to the numerous correspondence to the minister, which usually take a lot longer to respond to. It is either that the law does not give enough authority to the municipalities, or

most of the councils' authority is controlled by the approval of the minister of Local Administration.

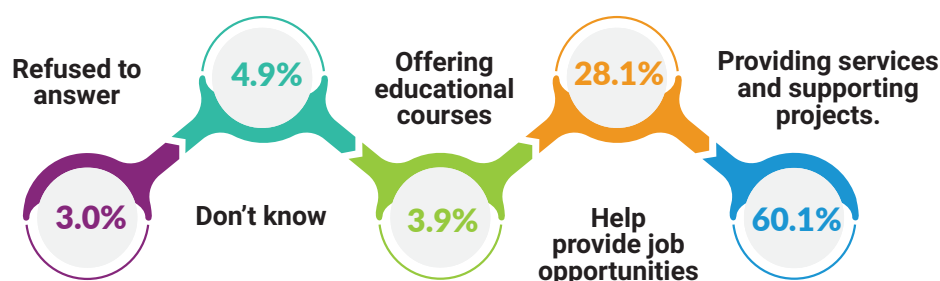
When heads of municipal and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about legal obstacles to women's economic participation particularly those related rules and regulations of municipal and governorate councils, answers were as follows:



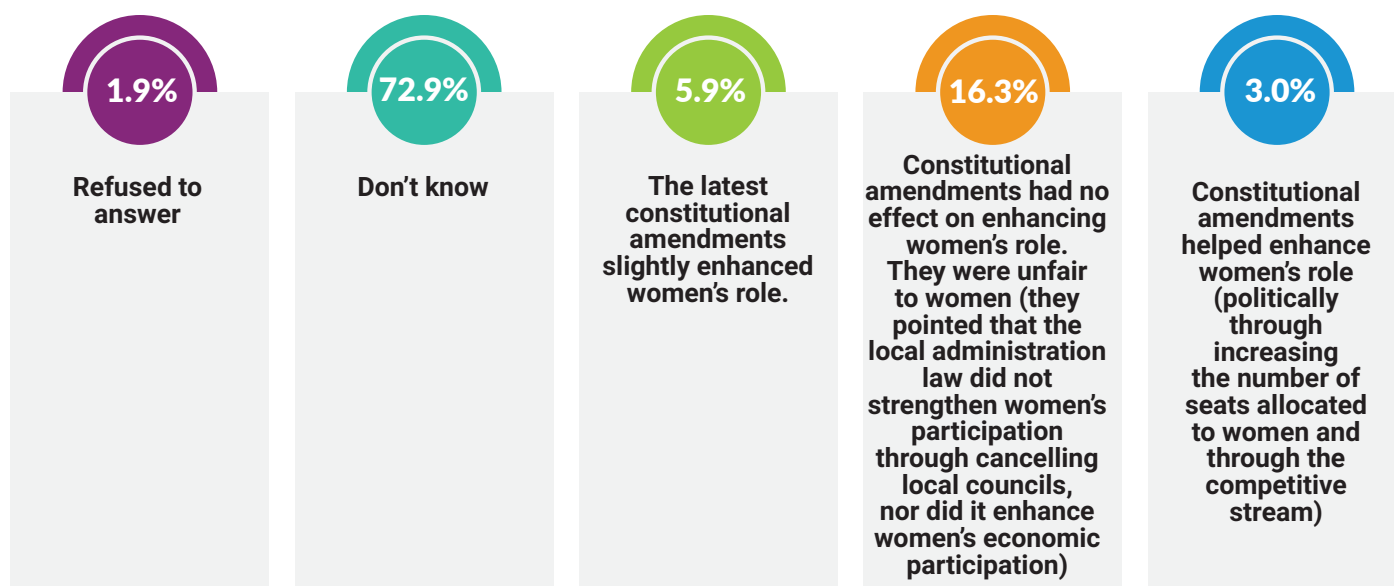
When heads of municipal and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about the council policy to enhance women's political and economic roles and decision making, the answers were as follows:



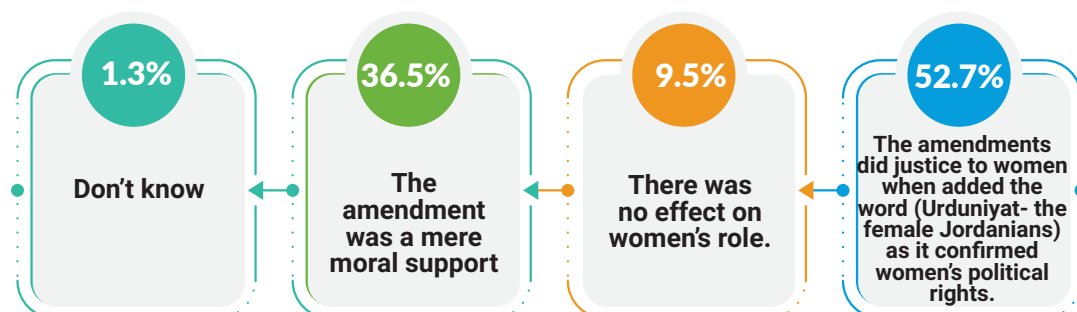
When female participants in the study were asked in person about their constituents' expectations from them, they answered:



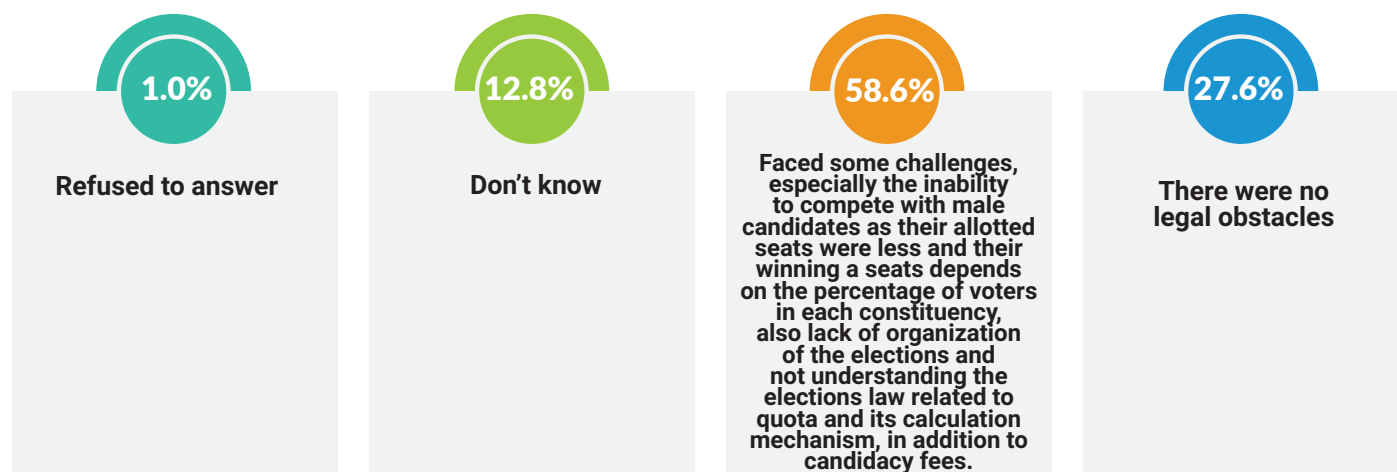
When female participants in the study were asked in person about the effect of the latest constitutional amendments in enhancing women's role in political and economic sectors, they answered:



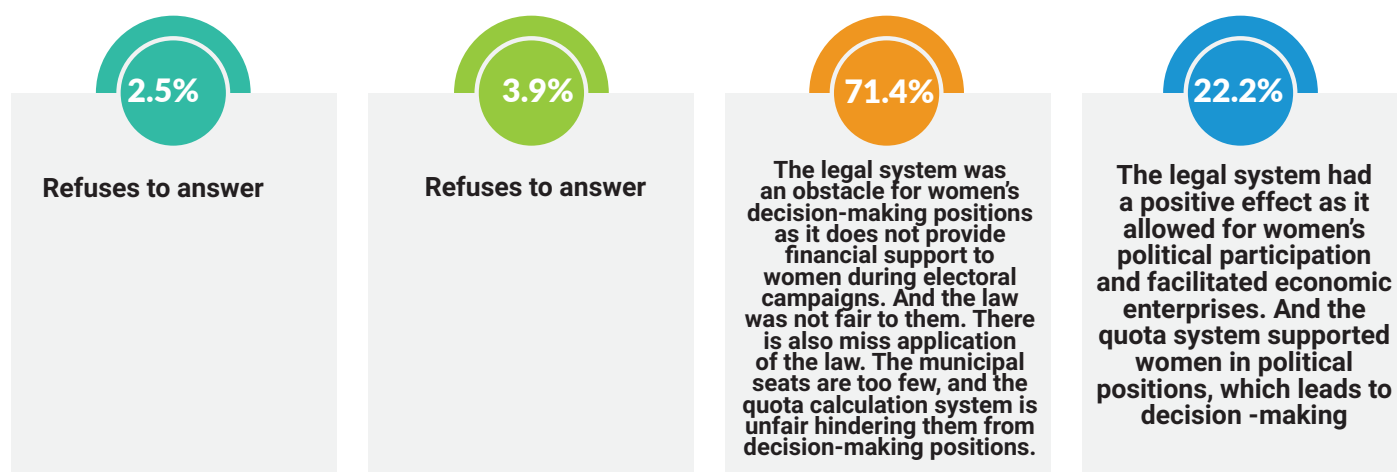
When heads of municipal and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about the effect of the latest constitutional amendments in enhancing the role of women, they answered:



As for the legal challenges faced by elected females during campaigns, the answers came as follows:



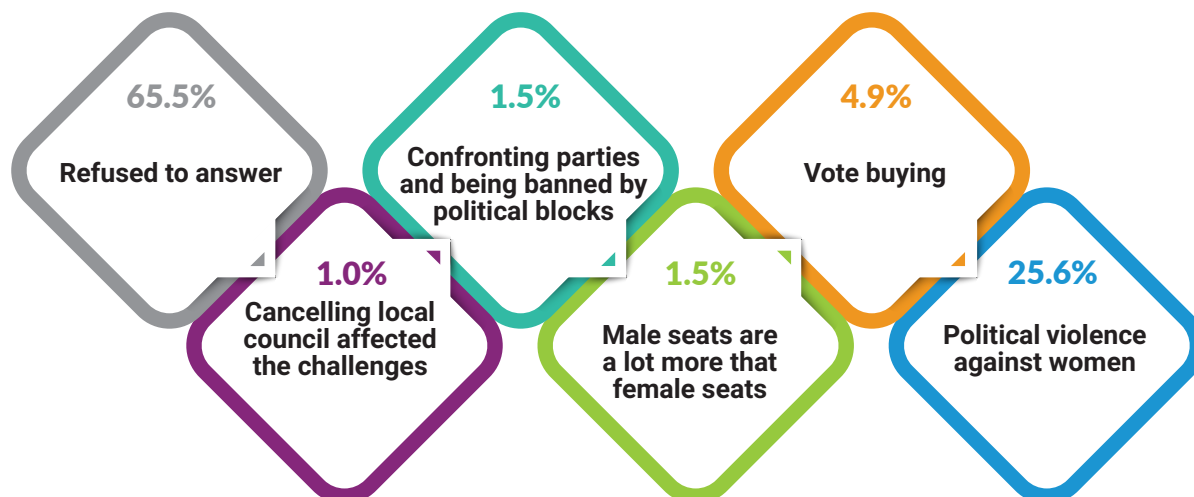
When elected females were asked about the effect of the legal system as a whole on women's political and economic participation and decision-making positions they answered:



As for the desired amendments of elected females to introduce to the local administration law to enhance women's participation allowing them to assume decision-making positions, the answers were:



When female participants in the study were asked in person about problems and challenges related to political laws which they faced during elections, the answered:



When heads of municipal and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about the means to enhance and develop women's political role in local communities, the answers were:



When heads of municipal and governorate councils participating in the study were asked about ways to enhance women's leadership roles in local communities, they answered:



Recommendations:

Based on the results of this study, the following are recommendations that would empower women and help them assume leadership positions.

On the social aspect, to empower women and help them reach leadership positions:

1. Involving males in training programs to encourage the two sexes to deal with one another to alter the society's views on women's participation.
2. Working with the media and training them on gender concepts and the importance of focusing on women's achievements to change the stereotypical image of women.
3. Intensifying the role of NGOs and civil society to change society's views of women through holding informative courses.
4. Women in leadership positions should share their experience with other women to encourage them to follow their lead.
5. Publish success stories of women who assumed leadership positions in different types of media as achievable stories.
6. Focusing on success stories which show the role of the father and the tribe in supporting women to run for elections and assume leading roles.
7. Enhancing the role of the educational system in eliminating the stereotyping of women's roles in society.

On the economic aspect, to empower women to reach leadership positions:

1. Developing women's ability to carry out and manage enterprises (book-keeping, marketing, packaging, market research)
2. Building women's awareness of related laws and regulations.
3. Establishing a proper transport network to allow women to travel comfortably and safely at a reasonable cost.
4. Providing courses by NGOs and civil society to improve women's awareness of their economic role and provide financial support and raise their awareness of the significance of economic participation and its effect on the gross domestic product.

On the legislative aspect, to empower women to reach leadership positions:

1. It is necessary to train the heads and members of municipal and governorate councils on the amendments and improvements in Jordanian laws, starting with constitutional amendments and political parties, elections and local administration laws to economic modernization plans.
2. Raise awareness of elected females of laws, regulations, rules and the mechanism to track them as they are issued.
3. Change the local administration law and returning local councils as before.
4. Altering the quota calculation mechanism, for calculating according to the percentage of voters in a constituency has deprived several women from large constituencies to win seats in the elected councils.
5. Coming up with new mechanisms to follow up the implementation of laws related to informing members of the time and date of session, and compelling councils to apply the principles of good governance and make sessions open and public as stated by the law.
6. Carrying out a legal review of the by-law for registering home businesses to make it more encouraging to women, and adjusting the existing electronic system of the Ministry of Agriculture and Industry to recognize home businesses to avoid worries about stopping the support from the National Aid Fund.
7. Facilitating the formation of women's empowerment units in all municipalities and providing them with necessary human and financial resources as well as work plans and strategies.
8. Removing the condition of resignation from candidacy eligibility criteria and replacing it with a college degree.
9. Establishing a mechanism to ensure that all members are informed of the timing of sessions.
10. Publishing meeting records on the municipal council website.
11. Allocating seats for women in all committees such as bidding and investment committees as well as others.

